



## **Park Adventures, Events & Activities December 2014 Santa Cruz District**



From sites rich in cultural history to the scenic beaches of the north coast, parks in the Santa Cruz District of California State Parks invite the visitor to explore and enjoy. The district stretches from the sand dunes of Sunset State Beach near Watsonville up the coast to Montara State Beach north of Half Moon Bay and inland to Castle Rock State Park near the town of Saratoga.

### **Wilder Ranch State Park**

Located two miles north of Santa Cruz, on Highway 1 (831) 426-0505

*A Special Event!*

### **Holidays on the Ranch Saturday, December 13, 11am to 3pm**

Wilder Ranch State Park creates the perfect atmosphere for friends, family and visitors to come together to celebrate the warmth of the holiday season with crafts, games, music and merriment from the early 20th century on Saturday, December 13, from 11:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. Celebrate the Winter Holidays as folks did in Californio, Victorian, and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Santa Cruz with crafts to make, games to play, cookies to decorate, wagon rides, wreath and candle making, view living history demonstrations inside historic houses. Holiday music sing-along. hot drinks and baked goods for sale. Parking is \$10, activities are free. The event is held on the grounds of the Wilder Ranch Cultural Preserve. The park is located 2 miles north of Santa Cruz on the coast side of Highway 1 at 1401 Coast Road Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Day-use parking fee is \$10. This event is appropriate for all ages. For more information, please call (831)426-0505.

### **Volunteering- A Great New Year's Resolution! Get Involved and Give Back at Wilder Ranch State Park**

**Sign-ups taking place now for training that begins Saturday, February 7 at 10am**

Get your hands busy at Wilder Ranch, where the park's educational programs depend on volunteers. Becoming a park docent is a great way to get involved and give back to your community. The success of Wilder Ranch's programs depend on volunteers, and park staff lead a series of in-depth training classes just once per year, so sign up now for your spot! Training begins Saturday, February 7, at 10 am at the park's historic Meder Home. After training, new volunteers give a minimum of 6 hours per month by hosting activity stations, leading nature walks, conducting tours of the grounds and buildings in the historic complex, and helping with events. Call (831) 426-0505 to request an information and application packet and become a docent at one of Santa Cruz's most treasured state parks!

Volunteers are especially needed to help with events, hikes and weekday school groups. Weekday volunteers lead activity stations at "ranch kid's days" where students get to experience

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life on the ranch first-hand. The success of this program is based on the number of volunteers available to lead each activity. Students come from local schools to try their hand at many early-day tasks including forging iron in the blacksmith shop, examining the workings of the water-powered Pelton Wheel, grooming the horses, churning butter from fresh cream, baking muffins and cookies and preparing vegetable soup on the wood burning oven, shucking corn to feed to the chickens, and washing laundry using bar soap, a grater, tubs, washboards, wringers and an old-fashioned iron. The day is an unforgettable lesson in local history for the kids, and a great way for you to volunteer, get involved, and give back.

To share your time to make these programs possible, please contact **Barbara at** Barbara.Cooksey@parks.ca.gov, or call the park at (831) 426-0505.

### **Wilder Ranch Tours and Living History Demonstrations**

**Weekends from 11 am to 3 pm**

#### **Guided Tour of the Ranch Buildings Weekends at 1pm**

Visit an early day dairy ranch and step back in time to the late 1800's at Wilder Ranch State Park. You can also play Victorian games or bring a picnic to enjoy on the front lawn, visit the farm animals and see what activities are taking place on the ranch this weekend; You may learn about hand quilting, watch blacksmithing, or wood stove baking techniques. Call (831) 426-0505 for more details.

### **History, Nature, and Scenic Views: A Tour of the Backcountry**

**Saturday, December 13 at 9 am**

This challenging guided three-hour hike will explore the natural and cultural history of the upper hills of Wilder Ranch State Park. Meet at the Wilder Ranch parking lot. Bring good walking shoes, lunch, snacks, and water. Hike cancelled if rain.

### **Wilder Ranch Coast Nature Walks**

**Saturdays, December 6, 20, and 27, at 11am**

On these two-hour natural history excursions you will explore the plants, animals, and geology of the spectacular coastal bluffs. Meet at the Wilder Ranch Interpretive Center. Bring a snack, water, binoculars, and good walking shoes. Rain cancels.

### **Wilder Ranch Coast Nature Walk**

**Thursday, January 1st at 11am to 1pm**

Step into 2015 at the seashore on this 2.5 mile easy hike along the Old Cove Landing Trail to explore the plants, animals, and geology of the spectacular coastal bluffs. Meet at the Wilder Ranch Interpretive Center at 11a.m for the two-hour guided hike for all ages. Bring a snack, water, binoculars, and wear good walking shoes. Rain cancels. Walk is appropriate for all hikers. Wilder Ranch is located at the northern end of Santa Cruz off Highway 1 at 1401 Coast Rd. For additional information, call (831)426-0505.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks. Visit us on the web at [www.thatsmypark.org](http://www.thatsmypark.org) or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

## **Año Nuevo State Park**

Located off Highway 1 between Pescadero and Santa Cruz, CA (650)879-2025

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### *"First Day" Hike!*

#### **Changes and Challenges: The Future of Our Parks-**

**Thursday, January 1 at 10 am**

Año Nuevo means "new year;" what better way to start 2015 than with a fresh take on a new (to most people) part of this aptly-named park? Please join interpretive specialist Joseph Carr Ritchie at the Franklin Point trailhead (south of Gazos Creek road, north of Rossi Road) for this easy .6 mile/1 km exploration of the changes and challenges waiting for us over the years to come—and some of the best views on the coastside! The walk will happen, rain or shine—hopefully rain!—so dress for changing weather and walking surfaces, such as shifting sand and slick boardwalks. Approximately 90 minutes. Recommended for ages 10 and up. For more information, please call 650.879.2025.

The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Coastside State Parks Foundation. Visit us on the web at [www.CoastsideStateParks.org](http://www.CoastsideStateParks.org) and [Facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks](https://www.facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks) or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

### **Butano State Park**

1500 Cloverdale Rd., Pescadero, CA 94060, (650) 879-2040  
[www.friendsofbutano.blogspot.com](http://www.friendsofbutano.blogspot.com) or [facebook.com/ButanoStatePark](https://www.facebook.com/ButanoStatePark)

#### **Wildflower Walk**

**Sunday, December 7, from 11am to 3pm**

Walk along the trails of Butano State Park with Volunteer Naturalist Scott Peden. This is a slowly-paced walk with time to discover and identify plants, flowers and animals in the park, and allow for photography if you choose. Bring water, lunch or snacks, and plenty of questions. Meet Scott at the park's Visitor Center near the entrance station. Allow 3 to 4 hours for this walk.

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### **Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park**

Located Off Hwy 9 in Felton (831) 335-7077

#### **Old-Growth Redwood Walks**

**Every Saturday in December at 1 p.m.**

Meet at the Visitor Center via the Park's main entrance off Hwy 9 in Felton.

Experience a guided forest adventure on a docent-led walk through the magnificent old-growth coast redwood forest. This .8 mile long stroll begins at 1pm and lasts about 1.5 hours. The trail is wheelchair and stroller accessible. Program is free, parking fee is \$10. More information is available at (831)335-7077.

#### **Basket Making Workshop: Learn how to make a basket with local pine needles!**

**Friday, December 5 from 3 to 5pm and**

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## **Saturday, December 20 from 10am to Noon**

Meet at the Visitor Center via the Parks main entrance off Hwy 9 in Felton.

Join Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park docent Cheryl VanDeVeer for a fun, free, family workshop learning how to make a basket from local pine needles. Meet at the Visitor Center. No experience necessary and all materials are supplied. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Program is free, parking fee \$10.

### *“First Day” Hike!*

## **Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park -- New Year's Day Cathedral Redwoods Hike**

Thursday, January 1 at 12 noon

On this 4 mile, moderate hike we'll venture to Cathedral Redwoods, a breath-taking and often unvisited location in our park. Taking Rincon Fire Road, we'll follow along the river and make a climb through some of the park's "back-country" on multiple scenic trails. This moderate hike is suitable for adults, and youth who are diligent hikers. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring walking shoes, water, sun protection and snacks. Please leave pets at home. Meet at 12 noon in front of the Visitor Center at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. Heavy rain cancels. The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

### *“First Day” Hike!*

## **Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park—New Year's Day Fall Creek Hike**

Thursday, January 1 at 2 pm

On this 3 to 4 mile hike, we will venture through the Fall Creek unit of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. We will hike along the Fall Creek Trail, exploring the riparian ecosystem of our park. We will also be visiting Lime Kilns, some of the remnants of a once successful lime processing industry. This moderate hike is suitable for adults, and youth who are diligent hikers. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring walking shoes, water, sun protection and snacks. Please leave pets at home. This trail is not suitable for strollers or wheelchairs. Meet at 2 pm at the Fall Creek Parking Lot located off Felton Empire Road. Heavy rain cancels. The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

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## **Natural Bridges State Beach**

Located at the end of West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz (831) 423-4609

## **Tours of the Monarch Grove -- October through January**

### **Saturdays and Sundays at 11am and 2 pm**

Join a Docent Naturalist for a tour of the state designated monarch butterfly preserve at Natural Bridges State Beach. Monarch butterflies are returning this fall to their winter home along our coast. Learn the story of this beautiful creature and its fascinating seasonal migration. Public tours are offered on weekends and no reservations are necessary, or you may call 423-4609 to arrange a tour for a group of 10 or more. Fall walks begin the 3rd weekend in October and

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continue through January or as long as monarchs are present: Monarch numbers vary, usually the highest numbers are visible in November/December. Meet at the Visitor Center for the hour-long program. The walk is wheelchair accessible.

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## **Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center**

Located 17 miles north of Santa Cruz, at 3600 Highway One, Davenport, California 95017  
Open Weekends Noon to 4 pm. Call (831)427-2288.

### **Tide Pool Exploration & Beach Clean-Up**

**Saturday, December 6, 2014 at 1 pm**

Come help us clean the beach and explore the wonders of the tide pools at south Waddell Beach – from anemones and sea stars to hermit crabs and kelp. We'll meet at the Waddell Beach parking lot at 1pm for a beach clean-up then at 2 pm make our way down the beach towards Greyhound Rock. Join us for this minus-tide adventure – but be sure to bring warm clothes, binoculars if you have them and tide pooling shoes!

### **Wildflower Hike**

**Saturday, December 13, 2014 at 10 am**

Take a hike among the wildflowers of Rancho del Oso's Waddell Valley. Docent naturalist Scott Peden will lead an approximately 4-mile hike to view a variety of wildflowers – there's always something exciting in bloom! Photographers are easily accommodated. Show up with lunch, water and energy to hike! Hike starts at the yellow gate located across the street from Waddell Beach.

### **Fireside Stories**

**Sunday, December 14, 2014 at 11am**

Pretend, play, sing and explore! Bring the family and gather round the fireplace together at the Nature and History Center for a story followed by activities focused on the theme of the story. This 30-minute program will introduce youngsters (recommend children be at least 3) to the wonders of nature!

### **Critter Crafts**

**Sunday, December 21, 2014 from Noon to 4 pm**

Drop in for fun nature-themed craft time at the Nature and History Center. We will have a FREE make-and-take-activity most children can complete independently, although parents may need to assist preschool-aged children. Any age child is welcome to participate!

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Waddell Creek Association. Visit us on the web at [www.ranchodeloso.org](http://www.ranchodeloso.org) or [www.facebook.com/RDOSP](http://www.facebook.com/RDOSP) or [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

## **Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park**

Located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz (831) 425-5849  
December hours of operation are Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 10 am to 4 pm. and Sundays from Noon to 4 pm. We will be closed on Thursday, December 25.

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### **Guided Adobe Tour**

**Saturday, December 6 at 1pm**

Join us at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park for a guided tour of the oldest building in Santa Cruz. Come learn about the many families who have called this 180-year-old mission adobe their home. This event is FREE. Tours are conducted rain or shine. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Drop In Family Craft – Candle Dipping**

**Saturday, December 6 from 1 to 3:30pm**

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. You can hand-dip a wax candle in our garden courtyard. The event is FREE. Rain Cancels. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Drop In Family Craft – Paper Roses**

**Saturday, December 13 from 1 to 3:30pm**

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. Create a bouquet of Tepeyac Hill roses in the tradition of the Lady of Guadalupe. This event is FREE. Rain or Shine. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Drop In Family Craft – Luminaria**

**Saturday, December 20 from 1 to 3:30pm**

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. You can fashion a tin lantern in our garden courtyard. The event is FREE. Rain Cancels. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Drop In Family Craft – Ramillettas**

**Monday, December 22 from 1 to 3:30pm**

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. Create colorful layered paper decorations. Rain or Shine. This event is FREE. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Guided Adobe Tour**

**Friday, December 26 at 1pm**

Join us at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park for a guided tour of the oldest building in Santa Cruz. Come learn about the many families who have called this 180-year-old mission adobe their home. This event is FREE. Tours are conducted rain or shine. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Drop In Family Craft – Ramillettas**

**Saturday, December 27 from 1 to 3:30pm**

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. Create colorful layered paper decorations. Rain or Shine. This event is FREE. The Santa Cruz Mission State

Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

### **Guided Adobe Tour**

**Monday, December 29 at 1pm**

Join us at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park for a guided tour of the oldest building in Santa Cruz. Come learn about the many families who have called this 180-year-old mission adobe their home. This event is FREE. Tours are conducted rain or shine. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

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## **Big Basin Redwoods State Park**

Located 9 miles outside of Boulder Creek on Hwy 236 (831) 338-8883

### **Redwood Loop Walk**

**Saturday, December 6 at 12 and 2 pm**

**Sunday, December 7 at 12 and 2 pm**

**Saturday, December 13 at 1 pm**

**Sunday, December 14 at 12 and 2 pm**

**Sunday, December 21 at 12 pm**

**Saturday, December 27 at 1 pm**

**Sunday, December 28 at 12 pm**

How do these grand redwoods grow to be so old? So tall? How are they important to humans? Join us for this fun and informative guided half-mile stroll through a magnificent old-growth redwood forest. Meet the famous Mother Tree, the Father of the Forest and the incredible Chimney Tree on this 90-minute walk. Stroller and wheelchair accessible. Meet at Headquarters.

### **Volunteer with the Trail Crew**

**Saturday, December 13 at 9 am (*must be 18 years of age or older*)**

Since 1969 the Big Basin Volunteer Trail Crew has helped make it possible for others to safely enjoy the beauty of our park. The Trail Crew meets the second Saturday of each month, rain or shine. A typical workday lasts until mid-afternoon. Please bring your own work gloves, lunch and water. Join us for a unique perspective of Big Basin, a lively and productive experience with others who share a love of these redwood forests, and the satisfaction of participating in a vital part of the park's ability to educate and inspire the public! Meet at Park Headquarters. Check [www.bigbasintrailcrew.org](http://www.bigbasintrailcrew.org) to confirm dates and time.

### **Discover Big Basin Redwoods!**

**Saturday, December 13 at 12 pm**

Explore some of the park's less travelled backcountry with docent naturalist Barry Grimm. This hike will be individually tailored to your group—so distance can vary from 2 to 8 miles, depending on your needs. The pace is always moderate—with occasional short stops to discover the park's unique animals, plants and other natural features. Based on group size, experience level and weather conditions, we will choose from the many trails that explore the park's most scenic

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areas. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring sturdy walking shoes, water and trail snacks. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Park Headquarters.

### **Berry Creek Falls Hike**

**Sunday, December 14 at 9:30 am**

Travel deep into the heart of Big Basin as you experience a wide range of habitats on this moderate to strenuous 11-mile-loop hike. Wind through shady redwood canyons and climb dry ridges as you hike to the jewel of Big Basin—65-foot Berry Creek Falls. Bring lots of water, lunch and wear layers. Docent Bill Rhoades guides you on this seven-hour hike. Meet at Park Headquarters.

### **Coffee Talk and Crafts**

**Saturday, December 20 from 9-12**

Come to the Sempervirens Room next to Park Headquarters for free coffee or hot chocolate! This is a great way to start your day in Big Basin. A Big Basin Docent will be happy to answer your questions about the park and help get you going on the right trail. And there's a fun craft activity for the kids!

### **Wildflower Walk!**

**Saturday, December 20 at 10 am**

**AND Sunday, December 21 at 10 am**

Join Docent Scott Peden and learn to identify many of Big Basin's flowering plants. You'll also visit several historical spots within the park. Saturday's walk is a leisurely four-mile, four-hour walk that includes two chimney trees and a waterfall. Sunday's walk is a relaxed five-mile, five-hour walk that includes a chimney tree. Bring water and lunch. Meet at Park Headquarters.

### **Holiday Redwood Loop Walk: The Nutcracker**

**Saturday, December 20 at 12 pm**

Enjoy a festive walk in the famous old-growth redwoods at Big Basin with docent Karen DeMello. We'll listen to The Nutcracker Suite and imagine the forest performing the ballet along the easy, level, half-mile Redwood Loop. Dress warmly. 1-1/2 hours. If it's raining, we'll listen inside our warm Visitor Center. Meet at Park Headquarters.

### **Coffee Talk**

**Sunday, December 21 from 9-11:30**

Come to the Sempervirens Room next to Park Headquarters for free coffee or hot chocolate! This is a great way to start your day in Big Basin. A Big Basin Docent will be happy to answer your questions about the park and help get you going on the right trail.

### **Coffee Talk and Crafts**

**Saturday, December 27 from 9:30-12:30**

Come to the Sempervirens Room next to Park Headquarters for free coffee or hot chocolate! This is a great way to start your day in Big Basin. A Big Basin Docent will be happy to answer your questions about the park and help get you going on the right trail. And there's a fun craft activity for the kids!

### **Hike to Buzzard's Roost**

**Saturday, December 27 at 10 am**



Develop your hiking muscles with this challenging 5-mile, 4-hour round trip to Buzzard's Roost. We'll gain 1,200 feet in elevation as we hike to a dramatic rock formation with a commanding view of the park. After a relaxed lunch on the rocks, we return to headquarters. Bring at least one liter of water, lunch, snacks, and appropriate clothing. Rain cancels. Meet at Park Headquarters.

### **Discover Big Basin Redwoods!**

**Sunday, December 28 at 11 am**

Explore some of the park's less travelled backcountry with docent naturalist Barry Grimm. This hike will be individually tailored to your group—so distance can vary from 2 to 8 miles, depending on your needs. The pace is always moderate—with occasional short stops to discover the park's unique animals, plants and other natural features. Based on group size, experience level and weather conditions, we will choose from the many trails that explore the park's most scenic areas. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring sturdy walking shoes, water and trail snacks. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Park Headquarters.

#### *"First Day" Hike!*

### **Shadowbrook Stroll**

**Thursday, January 1 at 10:30 am**

Join Docent Hal Anjo as he guides you on a less-traveled trail that takes you by Union Creek, to the Sempervirens Falls and back through the redwoods. This is a four-mile, 3.5-hour hike. Bring water and good hiking shoes. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Park Headquarters. This moderate hike is suitable for adults, and youth who are diligent hikers. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

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Chimney Tree on this 90-minute walk. Stroller and wheelchair accessible. Meet at Headquarters. The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

*"First Day" Hike!*

**Coffee Talk and Crafts**

**Thursday, January 1 from 9:30-12:30**

Come to the Sempervirens Room next to Park Headquarters for free coffee or hot chocolate! This is a great way to start your day in Big Basin. A Big Basin Docent will be happy to answer your questions about the park and help get you going on the right trail. And there's a fun craft activity for the kids! Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring walking shoes, water and snacks. The annual First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states offer an opportunity to join with others across America who are building a tradition of beginning the new year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike at a state park near you.

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## **Castle Rock State Park**

**The Rockstars of Castle Rock State Park First Day Hike**

**Thursday, January 1, 2015 from 1pm to 2:30pm**

What's the first thing you think of when you think of Castle Rock? Come see the towering, cavernous rock formations called "tafoni." Marvel in their beauty and savor their delicate splendor. You will learn how these radical rockstars were born, and what you can do to keep them rocking out for generations to come. The trail to Castle Rock hike is a .9 mile hike of moderate difficulty. Hike meets in the day use parking lot off of Highway 35 (south of the intersection of Hwy 35 and Hwy 9). No water is available in the park; bring plenty of water and snacks for yourself. Free. Please wear appropriate footwear for hiking (i.e. no flip-flops, high-heels, or shoes without significant tread). Please direct questions to [Audrey.stapleton@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Audrey.stapleton@parks.ca.gov).

Events Made Possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks,  
and Portola-Castle Rock Foundation

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